9. H.M.T. Ltd.
10. H.M.T. (Bearings) Ltd.
11. Hindustan Paper Corporation Ltd. (HPC)
12. Hindustan Photo Films Manufacturing Company Ltd. (HPF)
13. Hindustan Salts Limited (HSL)
14. Instrumentation Ltd. (ILK)
15. Lagan Jute Machinery Company Ltd. (LAGAN)
16. Mandya National Paper Mills Ltd. (MNPM)
17.' Nepa Ltd. (NEPA)
18. National Industrial Development Corporation Ltd. (NIDC)
19. Praga Tools Ltd. (PT)
20. Scooters India Ltd. (SIL)
21. Sambhar Salts Ltd. (SSL)
22. Tungabhadra Steel Products Ltd. (TSPL)
23. Tyre Corporation of India Ltd. (TCIL)

The exact extent of shares to be transferred would be decided with the approval of the competent authority on case to case basis.

Financial AdviseryMerchant Bankers have been appointed in most of the cases to carry out the process.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Levy of duty on imported acetylene

2326. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in the Economic Times, dated 10th September, 1998 captioned "Standing Board has no leg to stand on";

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of the decision taken by the Standing Board on the recommendation regarding levy of Rs. 12950 per metric tonne as safeguard duty on imported acetylene black alongwith the date on which the said proposal was received by the Standing Board;

(d) whether any assessment has been made about the -damage caused to the domestic industry on account of delay in initiating action on the above proposal; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) The Government is aware of the news-item referred to. The Committee of Secretaries in its meeting held on 3.2.1998 decided that the recommendations of the Director General, Safeguards should be placed before the Standing Board on Safeguards. Accordingly, the Standing Board on safeguards has been constituted to look into the matter relating to imposition of safeguard duties based on the recommendations of the Director General, Safeguards.

(c) The Director General, Safeguard's recommendations for imposition of safeguard duty on acetylene black was received on 19.6.1998. The matter was discussed in the second meeting of the Standing Board on Safeguards on 23.7.1998. It was decided that the Department of Chemical and Petrochemical should examine and give a detailed report to the Board in the next meeting. It was also decided to examine whether the imposition of the proposed safeguard duty on acetylene black would involve exceeding the bound rates on this product notified by India to the WTO. Thereafter, in the next meeting of the Standing Board on Safeguard held on 23rd October, 1998, the Board considered the re-commendations of the Director General, Safeguards, the comments of the Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals and also a note on bound rates. Keeping in view the situation of the domestic industry, the Board recommended safeguard duty on acetylene black (including conductive carbon) for a period of two years as follows:—

(1) 18% in the first year but should not exceed Rs. 12,950 per metric tonne.

(2) 5% in the second year but not exceeding Rs. 8,830 per metric tonne.

(d) and (e) The Government takes a view on the matter of imposing safeguard duty after following certain laid down procedures and considering the interests of the domestic industry, the importers as well as user industry. The Standing Board on Safeguard has decided to impose a safeguard duty on the item acetylene black, after considering the matter from all possible angles.

Protests lodged by China

2327. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that China has lodged protest over imposition of anti-dumping duties on its exports by India; and

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction in respect thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) The Government has received representations from Industry representatives of the People's Republic of China protesting imposition of anti-dumping duties recommended on imports of mctal-lurigical coke originating in or exported from China.

Anti-dumping duties are imposed on the basis of the recommendations of the Designated Authority appointed under the Customs Tarrif Act and the Rules made thereunder. The procedure followed by the Designated Authority for recommending anti-dumping duties is quasi-judicial in nature. Due opportunities arc provided to all interested parties, including the exporters from the subject countries, to defend their interests. Moreover, the orders passed by the the Designated Authority are appellablc before the Central Excise & Gold Control (Appellate) Tribunal.

Patenting of Basmati Rice

2328. SHRI D1PANKAR MUKHERJEE:
SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some producers in the United States have been able to secure the patent for basmati rice outside the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof with the date from which the patent has been validated and the name of the country wherein this has happened;

(c) whether Government have taken up the issue with the W.T.O.;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for delay thereon, if any; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) A patent under the title "Basmati Rice Lines and grains" has been granted to Rice Tec. Inc. Alvin Texas on 2.9.97 by the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, The United States of America. Government has no knowledge of the patent having been obtained in any other country.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Patents are granted by respective Governments under their Patents laws. Whenever information is received about patents being taken on certain products which are of commercial interest to India and which in our views do not satisfy the criteria of patentability, steps arc taken to assess whether the grant of patent can be challenged. After sufficcnt material is gathered, a challenge petition is filed for re-examination and ultimate revocation of patent in that country.